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ABSTRACT

A four-phase positive discipline plan, based on William Glasser's "Reality Therapy" concepts and designed for grades K-5, is described. The goal of the plan is to teach the students to assume responsibility for their own actions; discipline is instructional, as opposed to punitive. A record is kept for each child upon which all serious behavior infractions are written. During phase 1 (1-5 behavior infractions), the teacher deals with the student directly, evaluates possible causes of inappropriate behavior, and attempts to find and reward positive aspects of the student's behavior. After three infractions, the student must meet with the teacher and develop a written plan to change the behavior. The parents are informed about the problem and the student's plan for change. If there are continuing behavior problems (6-10 infractions, phase 2), the student must meet with the principal and school counselor and develop another written plan for changing behavior. Ten or more infractions (phase 3) will call for a meeting of the student with the teacher, principal, counselor, and parents, and the development of another written plan for behavior change. Misbehavior beyond this point (phase 4) results in suspension and work with a behavior specialist. (JD)

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"School Discipline: A New Management System That Works"

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SCHOOL DISCIPLINE: A NEW MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THAT WORKS

by Sarah M. Butzin

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Maintaining order in the classroom is a major responsibility for teachers. More than a century ago, the following advice was given to teachers in a book called the Theory and Practice of Teaching:

> The teacher should never proceed without the attention of the class. A loss of interest is sure to follow a wont of attention. When the attention is aroused, the impression made is enduring: and one idea communicated is worth a hundred at any other time (Page, 1866, p.111).

More recently, educational researchers, have verified Page's folk wisdom that students cannot learn if they are not paying attention. In 1963 Carroll developed a model of time and learning which suggests that the degree of learning (school achievement) is a function of the time actually spent (opportunity to learn and perseverance of the learner) relative to the time needed (aptitude of the learner; ability of the learner; and quality of instruction), (See Figure 1). Using this model as a conceptual base, research has consistently verified the positive correlation between engaged time (also called time on task) and academic

$$\text{Degree of Learning (School Achievement)} = f\left(\frac{\text{Time Actually Spent (Opportunity + Perserverance)}}{\text{Time Needed (Aptitude + Ability + Quality of Instruction)}}\right)$$

Figure 1. A Model of School Learning (Carroll, 1963)

achievement. See for example the comprehensive reviews of the literature on time and learning by Rosenshine, 1978; Denham & Lieberman, 1980; Walberg, 1982; Graden et al, 1982; Walberg & Fredrick, 1982; Waxman & Walberg, 1982.

While the research evidence supports the critical importance for students to have high amounts of time on task, the research literature also suggests that time on task is becoming increasingly lower in American schools. A great deal of the school day is spent in non-engaged time due to interruptions, disruptions, waiting, transition time, etc. A recent study of 1016 classrooms across America found that over half of the students' time was spent in noninstructional activities (Goodlad, 1983). This research supports the findings of other descriptive studies that students are not engaged in learning tasks for 40% or more of the school day (Perkins, 1964; Goodlad & Klein, 1970; Quirk et al, 1974; Hester & Ligon, 1978; Paulissen, 1978; Chow et al, 1981). A longitudinal comparison of studies from 1862 to 1978 (Denham & Lieberman, 1980) shows the continuing increase in noninstructional time over the years (See Figure 2).

This trend has come to the attention of the public through recent reports such as that of the The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). These reports have included calls for increased time on task through increasing the amount of time in the school day and the school year. However, the real solution would seem to lie in better use of the time already available. As the research shows, a great deal of this is wasted time. Teachers

STUDY	GRADE 2	GRADE 5
1862 data for 6 cities (Mann)	16	18
1904 survey of 6 cities (Payne)	7	7
1914 survey of 50 cities (Holmes)	12	10
1926 survey of 144 cities (Mann)	11	10
1978 BTES A-B period	45	46
1978 BTES B-C period	44	47

Figure 2. Time Allocations in Minutes per Day Across the Decades for Management, Wait, and Transition. (Includes opening exercises in the earlier studies.) (Denham & Lieberman, 1980)

must be trained to be better stewards of the time allotted for them to teach. Preservice training and inservice training must put more emphasis on classroom management and discipline techniques if classrooms are to become places where high time on task is possible. Disruptions, interruptions, and dead time must be kept to a minimum.

Apparently teacher training programs are not always doing the job. Beginning teachers report that they are surprised and discouraged by discipline problems which prevent them from teaching and disrupt the flow of lessons. In a survey of 315 inservice teachers and 387 preservice teachers in 10 southeastern states, 95% of the inservice teachers identified discipline problems as discouraging. This contrasts with only 49% of the preservice teachers who believed discipline would be discouraging (Page, 1983). Teacher training programs need to question these kinds of discrepancies in preparing future teachers to manage the complexities of the classroom for optimum learning time.

Florida's "Performance Measurement System" has identified 20 generic competencies that make for effective teachers. First on the list is to "begin on time and maintain on-task behavior." Other competencies relate to discipline and management skills, including "manage student conduct to maintain instruction and avoid disruption." Therefore schools and teachers need a discipline management system that works. We feel we have such a system at the Developmental Research School (DRS) at the Florida State University.

A PLAN FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE: HOW IT WORKS

The discipline plan is designed for use in grades K-5. It could be adapted for other grade levels. The plan is based upon William Glasser's "Reality Therapy" concepts (Glasser, 1965). The key component is that the child is placed in the center of a supporting structure of teacher, counselor, administrator, and parent (See Figure 3). But it is the child who is ultimately responsible for his/her own behavior.

The goal of the discipline plan is to teach the students to assume responsibility for their own actions. Discipline is instructional, as opposed to punitive. Therefore, corporal punishment is not a part of this plan. The use of corporal punishment removes responsibility from the student and sanctions violence as a means to solve problems. This point needs to be emphasized because corporal punishment is still a common practice in American schools, with over 1.5 million children being beaten in their schools each year. Florida leads the nation with routine hitting of its children, with 1 out of 8 students receiving corporal punishment in a typical school year (Today's Child, 1983).

The DRS discipline plan will be most effective in a school climate that is democratic and positive. The school must be a place where children like to be, a school which is continually striving to be a "good" place, as Glasser calls it. "A good place

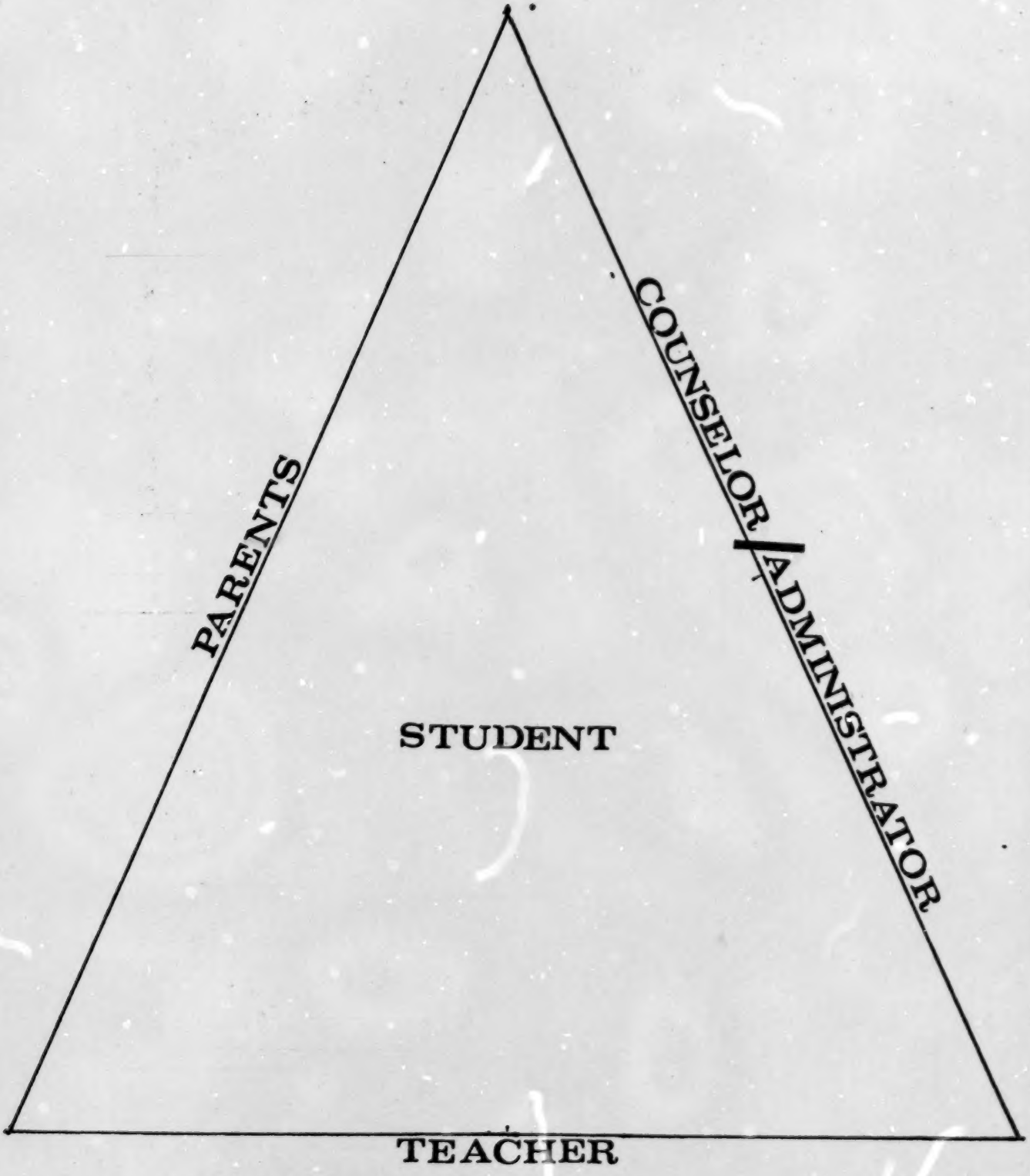

Figure 3. Components of Discipline Plan

is one where people are courteous, where one often hears laughter that springs from genuine joy brought about by involvement with caring people engaged in relevant work, where communication is practiced, not just preached (Glasser, 1965)."

The discipline plan involves four phases through which a child progresses for engaging in persistent disruptive behavior. Each homeroom teacher maintains a file box with space for discipline cards for each student. Special area teachers (music, art, physical education, librarian) send their discipline cards to the homeroom teacher for storage in the box. In this way the homeroom teacher can keep tabs on the student's behavior in other classes and can determine whether the problem lies within a particular class or is chronic across all classes. . The cards are 5 x 7 index cards on which the student's persistent inappropriate actions are recorded.(See Figure 4). After a certain number of cards, the teacher and student write plans to change the behavior (See Figure 5). The plans are signed and filed in the box. At the end of each grading period, the slate is "wiped clean" and every student has a new beginning.

Any infractions which cause danger to the student or other students such as fist fights, throwing scissors, climbing on rooftops, etc. require that the student be sent home for the remainder of the day. This reinforces the ultimate rule that dangerous acts will not be tolerated at this school.

Persistence and consistency are of utmost importance for the plan to work. Very difficult cases may take a full 9 weeks before

[redacted] – Nov. 1

Lunchroom: yelling, out of seat, banging salt shaker, standing on chair – reprimanded by teache 2 times!

(First Grader)

12-8-82

[redacted] (Third Grader)

[redacted] is playing and is throwing another child on the ground, (Granted the child was calling him names but I only saw the action).

When I asked [redacted] to stop and come to me, he stomped around & said "I'm not going to go see that girl"

I then went to get him and walk him to my room. As we walked he said to me, "You big fat" and whatever ending, he was wise enough to keep to himself. Mr. [redacted]

Figure 4. Sample Discipline Cards

[redacted] Plan (First Grader)

I'll do my work. When I am unhappy with what the teacher wants me to do, I will sort out the words.

[redacted]

Mo. [redacted] Nov. 9, 1982

4-27-83

(Fourth Grader)

Don't act bad no more. We use common cents. Be nice to classmates. Don't talk out loud in class.

[redacted]

Figure 5. Sample Discipline Plans

improvement in behavior takes place. However, if students know that the school is serious in maintaining a healthy learning environment and cares about helping them, few children should ever reach the final phase of the plan.

The four phases are described in the next section of this paper. For a summary of the phases, see Figure 6.

PHASE 1

Student/Teacher

1. The teacher must seriously analyze why a particular student is a problem. Is the student frustrated with academics?... bored?...experiencing family problems?...Is the classroom a place where students like to be?...Is the student made to feel important?...successful?...special?

2. The teacher must then make an effort to plan a better tomorrow for the student. The teacher must "catch the student being good" and reward that behavior. The teacher must write down and carry out this plan for at least one week.

3. All serious infractions are to be recorded on a file card. Each student in the class will have such a card. Students capable of recording their own should do so, otherwise the teacher will list the infractions in a factual manner. For example, "Suzie pinched

PHASE 1: STUDENT/TEACHER (1 - 5 infractions)

1. Teacher evaluates possible causes of student's inappropriate behavior.

2. Teacher writes a plan to find and reward positive aspects of student's behavior. Plan is followed for at least one week.

3. Serious and persistent infractions are recorded on file card.

4. After 3 infractions, student writes a plan with teacher's guidance.

5. Teacher informs the parents.

PHASE 2: STUDENT/ADMINISTRATOR/COUNSELOR (6 - 10 infractions)

1. Student takes card(s) to office.

2. Student writes a plan with administrator's guidance.

3. Student takes signed plan and card(s) to counselor for discussion and signature.

4. Student readmitted to class with signed plan and card(s).

PHASE 3: STUDENT/PARENTS/ADMINISTRATOR/COUNSELOR/TEACHER(S) (10 or more infractions)

1. Student takes card(s) to office. Student and administrator call parents to arrange a conference.

2. At the conference, student writes a plan with guidance from parents, teacher(s), counselor, administrators. All parties sign plan.

3. Failure to follow this plan results in suspension until parent accompanies student to school with a written and signed plan.

PHASE 4: STUDENT/PROFESSIONAL AGENCY

1. Student is suspended until a plan is worked out with a specialist.

Figure 6. Summary of Developmental Research School Discipline Plan

John on the arm and snatched his pencil away."

4. After 3 serious infractions within a grading period (9 weeks), the student must meet with the teacher to develop a plan to change the behavior. This plan will be recorded on a card and signed by both the student and teacher. The plan must be a plan for positive action. "I won't do it anymore" is not an adequate plan.

5. The teacher informs the parents about the problem and the student's plan for change.

PHASE 2

Student/Administrator/Counselor

1. If the students fails to follow the plan, the subsequent infractions will be recorded on the card. For the 6th through 10th infractions, but student must take the card to the office. The student will be isolated there until a new plan is worked out with the guidance of an administrator, usually the assistant principal. The plan is written down and signed. The student next reports to the counselor to discuss the plan, and only then may return to the classroom.

PHASE 3

Student/Teacher/Administrator/Counselor/Parents

1. If the student continues to be unable to follow the plan for changing disruptive behavior, the student will be required to call the parents to arrange for a conference. At the conference, the student must develop a plan agreeable to all parties present which include the parents, teacher(s), administrator, and counselor. All parties sign the plan.

2. If the student violates this plan, the student will be suspended until able to produce a plan that will work. A parent must accompany the student back to school with the plan signed by the student and parent.

PHASE 4

Student/Professional Agency

1. In the rare instance that PHASES 1, 2, and 3 fail to be effective in changing the student's behavior, the student will be referred to a helping agency or special educational program. The student will not be permitted to return to the classroom until a plan has been developed with the help of specialists.

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